

Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-10

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TO AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY

INFO AMCONSUL BOMBAY

AMCONSUL MADRAS

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: OVIP (CHRISTOPHER, WARREN)

SUBJECT: BACKGROUNDER WITH INDIAN JOURNALISTS - CHRISTOPHER
TRIP

1. DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARIES DUBS (NEA) AND RESTON (PA)
HAD BACKGROUNDER WITH CORRESPONDENTS FROM INDIAN EXPRESS,
HINDU, STATESMAN, AND THE HINDUSTAN TIMES JULY 19. IN ADDI-
TION, NEA/INS PROVIDED TELEPHONE FILL-IN ON MEETING TO
SAMACHAR REPRESENTATIVE WHO WAS UNABLE TO COME DOWN FROM
NEW YORK. TIMES OF INDIA CORRESPONDENT WAS APPARENTLY OUT
OF TOWN.

2. DUBS NOTED ADVENT OF NEW ADMINISTRATIONS IN DELHI AND
WASHINGTON WITH SIMILAR OUTLOOKS PROVIDED UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY
TO WORK FOR EXPANDED BILATERAL RELATIONS AND STRESSED THAT
THE U.S. ADMINISTRATION WAS KEENLY INTERESTED IN PROMOTING
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BETTER RELATIONS WITH INDIA. DUBS REVIEWED THE GENERAL OUT-
LINE OF U.S. POLICY TOWARD SOUTH ASIA ALONG THE LINES SPELL-
ED OUT IN HIS MARCH 22 STATEMENT AND ASSISTANT SECRETARY
ATHERTON'S JUNE 20 TALK. DUBS STRESSED THAT THE IMMEDIATE
BILATERAL TASK WITH REGARD TO INDIA WAS TO UPGRADE THE LEVEL
OF OUR DIALOGUE. THE CHRISTOPHER TRIP WOULD BE AN IMPORTANT
STEP IN THIS PROCESS.

3. REPORTERS' QUESTIONS FOCUSED ON A VARIETY OF TOPICS, MOST SHARPLY ON TARAPUR AND RELATED NUCLEAR ISSUES. ON THIS, DUBS STRESSED THAT THE PRESIDENT AND DESAI SHARED A DEEP COMMITMENT TO MAKE PROGRESS TOWARD REDUCING THE NUCLEAR THREAT. DUBS SAID THAT WE WELCOMED THE PRIME MINISTER'S STATEMENTS COVERING HIS VIEWS ON NUCLEAR WEAPONS AND TESTING AND WERE MUCH ENCOURAGED BY THEM. REGARDING UPCOMING NYE VISIT, DUBS SAID THIS WAS PART OF THE ON-GOING DIALOGUE ON NUCLEAR MATTERS. WE WERE APPROACHING THIS IN THE SPIRIT OF GOODWILL AND HOPED THAT MUTUALLY SATISFACTORY CONCLUSIONS WOULD EMERGE.

4. ON SOUTH ASIA ARMS POLICY, DUBS NOTED THAT THE A-7 DECISION WAS TAKEN IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE ADMINISTRATION'S GLOBAL POLICY, WHICH RULED OUT OUR BEING THE FIRST COUNTRY TO INTRODUCE A NEW ADVANCED WEAPONS SYSTEM INTO A REGION. THIS DID NOT, HOWEVER, MEAN WE WOULD NOT SELL OTHER WEAPONS TO INDIA OR PAKISTAN UNDER THE CURRENT POLICY, WHICH DUBS REVIEWED FOR THE JOURNALISTS.

5. ON AID, DUBS CONFIRMED THAT WE HAD OFFERED TO RESUME BILATERAL AID IF INDIA WISHED, BUT THIS WAS A DECISION FOR THE GOI TO MAKE.

6. ASKED ABOUT THE SECRETARY'S VISIT, DUBS SAID THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SECRETARY EXPECTED TO COME LATER THIS YEAR FOR BILATERAL TALKS AND THE JOINT COMMISSION MEETING. IT WOULD NOT BE IN OCTOBER BUT AT A LATER TIME TO BE WORKED OUT BETWEEN THE TWO GOVERNMENTS. VANCE

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